

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of playing a casino game with a normal play mode and a free play mode, the method comprising:

5 receiving a wager for the casino game in said normal play mode,

generating a game outcome in response to receiving the wager in normal play mode;

10 initiating the free play mode when the game outcome matches a first game outcome;

continuing in said free play mode to play the casino game until the game outcome matches a second game outcome which stops the free play mode and returns the casino game to the normal play mode.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said continuing comprises:

continuing play of said casino game in said free play mode until a stop signal is generated by said casino game.

3. A method of playing a casino game with a normal play mode and a free play mode comprising:

5 randomly entering the free play mode from the normal play mode,

randomly entering the normal play mode from the free play mode, such that the frequency of entering the free play mode from the normal play mode is less than the frequency of entering the normal play mode from the free play mode.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said randomly entering said normal play mode from said free play mode provides a variable

number of consecutive plays of said casino game between different instances of said free play mode.

5. A method of playing a casino game comprising:
using the symbols shown as the outcome of the base game and the selection of at least one of them for starting an additional bonus game.

6. A method of playing a casino game having a normal play mode and a free play mode, the method comprising:
initiating said normal play mode of said casino game;
entering said free play mode of said casino game from
5 said initiated normal play mode;
enabling play of the casino game to remain in said free play mode for a variable number of plays of said casino game; and
exiting said free play mode of said casino game upon completion of said variable number of plays.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
for a given casino game outcome, paying a multiplier
award equal to the normal-play-mode award for said given casino
game outcome multiplied by a multiplying factor, for at least a portion
5 of said plays of said casino game in said free play mode.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the multiplying factor equals three.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein said paying comprises:
paying only said normal-play-mode award level for
bonus game awards occurring in said free play mode.

10. The method of claim 6 wherein said initiating comprises:

receiving a wager from said player.

11. The method of claim 6 wherein said enabling comprises:
permitting said play of said casino game to remain in
said free play mode until a randomly occurring triggering event takes
place.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said permitting
comprises:

ending said play in said free play mode upon incurring
an appearance of a stop symbol in a game outcome during said free-
play-mode play.

5

13. The method of claim 6 wherein said entering comprises:
selecting a free-play-mode value at random from a
plurality of values.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said selecting
comprises:

randomly assigning each of a plurality of values to a
different one of a plurality of player input devices; and

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activating a player input device of said player input
devices having said free-play-mode value assigned thereto.

15. A method of playing a casino game having a normal
play mode and a free play mode, the method comprising:

initiating said normal play mode of said casino game;

entering said free play mode of said casino game from

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said initiated normal play mode upon occurrence of a particular game
outcome in said normal play mode;

remaining in said free play mode until an occurrence of
a randomly occurring triggering event; and

10 re-entering said normal play mode from said free play mode upon the occurrence of said triggering event.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said entering comprises:

randomly generating said particular game outcome from a plurality of possible game outcomes.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said remaining comprises:

generating a game outcome for each play of the casino game in said free play mode;

5 evaluating, after each said play of said casino game in said free play mode, whether said game outcome includes a signal operative to stop said free play mode; and

ending said free play mode only if said stop signal is provided.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

providing an at least substantially equal probability of inclusion of said stop signal in said game outcome for each said play of said casino game in said free play mode.

19. The method of claim 17 further comprising:

providing an identical probability of inclusion of said stop signal in said game outcome for each said play of said casino game in said free play mode.

20. A method of playing a casino game having a normal play mode and a free play mode, the method comprising:

initiating said normal play mode of said casino game;

5 establishing a probability of entering said free play mode
from said normal play mode in each play of said casino game within
said normal play mode, said probability being a first probability;

 establishing a probability of exiting said free play mode
in each play of said casino game within said free play mode, said
probability of exiting said free play mode being a second probability;

10 entering said free play mode from said initiated normal
play mode according to said established first probability; and

 exiting said free play mode according to said established
second probability, said established second probability providing a
variable number of consecutive plays of said casino game in said free
15 play mode.

21. The method of claim 20 further comprising:
 adjusting said first probability and said second
probability to control a house advantage of said casino game.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein said first probability is
at least substantially equal for all plays of said casino game in said
normal play mode.

23. The method of claim 20 wherein said providing a
variable number of consecutive plays comprises:

5 providing a variable number of consecutive plays of said
casino game in said free play mode, between said entering and said
exiting, among different instances of said free play mode.

24. The method of claim 20 wherein said initiating said
normal play mode comprises:

 receiving a wager from a player for play of said casino
game.

25. Apparatus for playing a casino game having a base game and a bonus game, the apparatus comprising:

a wager/award input/output for receiving a wager from a player to initiate said base game;

5 a player input operative to enable entry into said bonus game from said initiated base game;

a memory for storing a stop signal indicative of a bonus-game-ending game outcome of said bonus game;

10 a computer, connected to said wager/award input/output, said player input, and said memory, wherein said computer is operative to:

provide at least one consecutive bonus game outcome, said at least one consecutive bonus game outcome being selected from a plurality of possible game outcomes;

15 determine whether a latest bonus game outcome matches said bonus-game-ending game outcome; and

end said bonus game upon discovering a match between said latest bonus game outcome and said bonus-game-ending game outcome, said computer generating said stop signal upon ending said bonus game.

20

26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said base game is a normal-play-mode game in which a wager is received for each play of said base game.

27. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said bonus game is a free-play-mode game in which play of said bonus game proceeds for free until said generation of said stop signal.

28. The apparatus of claim 25 further comprising:
a game display operative to inform a player of said casino game of options for activation of said player input.

29. Apparatus for playing a casino game having a normal play mode and a free play mode, the apparatus comprising:

a wager/award input/output for receiving a wager from a player to initiate said normal play mode of said casino game;

5 a player input operative to enable entry into said free play mode from said initiated normal play mode;

a memory for storing a stop signal indicative of a free-play-mode-ending game outcome of play in said free play mode;

10 a computer, connected to said wager/award input/output, said player input, and said memory, wherein said computer is operative to:

provide at least one consecutive free play mode game outcome, said at least one consecutive free play mode game outcome being randomly selected from a plurality of possible game outcomes;

15 determine whether a latest free play mode game outcome matches said free-play-mode-ending game outcome; and

end said free play mode upon discovering a match between said latest free play mode game outcome and said free-play-mode-ending game outcome, said computer generating said stop signal upon ending said free play mode.

20